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EdReach Newsletter - Week of December 7, 2007  
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#### Rex renews push for public school choice

State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex unveiled the details of legislation he will support during the 2008 General Assembly to increase the number and variety of choices available to students and their families. To read more, visit:  
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=878>

#### South Carolina poised to lead on public school choice

In a commentary, Congressman James E. Clyburn commends Education Superintendent Jim Rex's effort to get our state government to implement a comprehensive public school choice program. To read more, visit:  
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/documents/CongressmanClyburnCommentary.pdf>

#### Facts about Jim Rex's public school choice plan

What does Jim Rex's public school choice bill do? Find out the details by visiting:  
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/Educational-Services/Public-School-Choice/documents/Public-School-Choice-Facts.pdf>

#### 655 join ranks of National Board certified teachers

Another 655 South Carolina teachers have completed the rigorous National Board certification process, boosting the state's teacher quality efforts and bringing the total number of achievers 5,734. To read more, visit:  
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=877>

#### Message from Jim Rex

Dear Friends,

If you're like me, nothing pleases you more than good news. Two national news stories and an announcement by the South Carolina Department of Education over the past

several days demonstrate that we are making progress toward creating schools that are second to none.

U.S. News & World Report, in its first ranking of "America's Best High Schools," rated Charleston County's Academic Magnet High School among the magazine's top 100 "gold" schools, at #27. These other 14 schools in our state earned silver or bronze honors from the magazine.

Charleston School of the Arts, Wando High (Charleston County), D.W. Daniel High School (Pickens County), Lexington High School (Lexington One), and Wando High School (Charleston County) earned silver honors. Palmetto State schools making the bronze category are Bethune-Bowman Middle School (Orangeburg District Five), Calhoun County High School, Greenville Technical Charter High, Latta High (Dillon District Three), Loris High (Horry County), Mayo High (Darlington County), Myrtle Beach High (Horry County), Ninety-Six High, (Greenwood District 52) Tamassee Salem High (Oconee County) and Woodruff High (Spartanburg District Four).

In all, the magazine considered more than 18,500 high schools in 40 states.

Schools were judged on how well students score on state reading and math tests, as well as participation and achievement in challenging Advanced Placement courses. The schools were screened first on achievement on standardized tests, with careful scrutiny given to the scores of disadvantaged students. Schools that made the initial cuts were rated on participation and performance in Advanced Placement courses. Those schools that don't offer AP courses or don't have enough students participating in them were eligible for silver and bronze performance awards.

These secondary schools aren't the only ones with bragging rights.

Five of our schools were nominated to compete in the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program, run by the U.S. Department of Education. This prestigious program honors public and private schools that are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement.

This year's nominees are Sanders-Clyde Elementary/Middle School (Charleston County), Carver Elementary (Florence District One), East End Elementary (Pickens County), Lake Carolina Elementary (Richland District Two), and Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School (Orangeburg Consolidated District Five).

In past years, any school could apply to compete in the National Blue Ribbon program. Under the program's new rules, however, state departments of education use the USDE's criteria to nominate schools that are then invited to complete applications. The 2008 winners will be announced in Washington next fall.

Finally on Tuesday, we received official word that 655 of our teachers successfully completed the rigorous National Board Certification process. According to the National

Board for Professional Teaching Standards, these results bring the number of state teachers receiving this credential to 5,734, the third highest in nation.

Only North Carolina and Florida have had more teachers successfully complete the rigorous process. South Carolina ranks second in the percentage of National Board Certified teachers in its schools, with more than 12.1 percent of our teaching force holding the nation's highest credential.

Strong, effective teachers are critical to ensuring the academic success of our young people, and the National Board process is part of our efforts to elevate the teaching profession. The process defines the knowledge, skills and accomplishments that symbolize teaching excellence. It was created so that teachers - just as professionals in other fields - could achieve distinction by demonstrating through a demanding performance assessment that they can meet high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do.

I congratulate all of these schools, their teachers, administrators, students and communities, along with those who join the ranks of National Board certified teachers. Your achievements demonstrate that "together, we can!"

Sincerely,

Jim Rex  
State Superintendent of Education

To read U.S. News & World Report's article:

[http://www.usnews.com/directories/high-schools/index\\_html/state\\_id+SC/page\\_number+1/page\\_size+10/sort+alpha/name+/award+/school\\_name+/county+/detail+less](http://www.usnews.com/directories/high-schools/index_html/state_id+SC/page_number+1/page_size+10/sort+alpha/name+/award+/school_name+/county+/detail+less)

To read more about Blue Ribbon Schools:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=875>

<http://www.ed.gov/programs/nclbbrs/index.html>

Read more about NBCT:

<http://www.nbpts.org/>

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=877>

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Rex on The Road:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/superintendent/Rex-on-The-Road-Schedule.html>

In The News:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/>

On The Air:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/On-The-Air.html>

Dates to Remember:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Dates-to-Remember.html>

Resources for Teachers:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Teachers.html>

Resources for Students:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Students.html>

Resources for Administrators:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-School-Administrators.html>

What Others Are Saying:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Education-RelatedEditorialOpinion.html>

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